

Charm offensive



In its new Pellar, AVID has unveiled its most enticing phono stage yet. **Ed Selley** listens in...

AVID is best known for its extensive range of turntables that make use of a sophisticated damping system that contributes to their distinctive appearance. In parallel, the company has also moved into phono stages and having already released the Pulsare and Pulsus, is entering the sub £1,000 category for the first time with the £600 Pellar. The Pellar is a simplified Pulsus. The most obvious example of this simplification is that the Pellar is a single chassis containing both the electronics and the power supply, while its bigger brother has an offboard one. The two designs share some components and both make use of a passive RIAA circuit as an aspect of the design.

The Pellar is capable of both moving magnet and moving coil operation. Out of the box, it comes set for moving magnet cartridges and has a default resistance of 47 Kohms, which should be ideal for most moving magnet cartridges. The Pellar can then be set for moving coil operation via a series of dip switches on the underside (and thank you AVID for not putting them under the hood!) with high and low gain settings available. Resistance for moving coils is a bit more involved than some rival designs.

The rear of the Pellar has an additional pair of phono connections to which you can add loading plugs to suit your cartridge. There are two ways of looking at this approach. It is more complex than designs where load is selected by switch, but equally, you can

select resistors that are exactly what your system needs for optimal replay results.

Visually, the Pellar is best described as 'no nonsense'. The black casework has a single visible control in the form of the power switch with LED and an AVID logo for adornment and that's your lot. This might not be the most visually striking device going, but fit and finish is excellent and I was impressed with some of the design touches like the rubber feet that provide good traction if the Pellar is placed on an amp, while at the same time avoiding marking it. AVID also provides a five year warranty which is impressive and generally suggests that they feel construction is pretty solid, too!

Sound quality

Connecting the Pellar to my Michell GyroDec, Roksan Tabriz and Dynavector DV20X combination, the overriding initial impression is how quiet it is. Background noise is a non-event on clean vinyl and even older pressings are still largely free of any audible interference. Once you stop listening for things that aren't there and pay attention to things that are, the news is equally positive...

DETAILS

PRODUCT:
AVID Pellar

ORIGIN:
UK

TYPE:
MM and MC phono stage

DIMENSIONS:
(WxHxD)
305x110x250mm

WEIGHT:
2.2kg

FEATURES:

- quoted noise: < -81dB MM, < -67dB MC
- quoted distortion: < 0.001%
- quoted RIAA: 5Hz - 70kHz, +/- 0.5dB
- gain: 48dB - 60dB - 70dB
- resistance loading: 47k - Custom
- capacitance loading: 100pf

DISTRIBUTOR:
AVID

TELEPHONE:
01480 869 900

WEBSITE:
avidhifi.co.uk

The Pellar is open, explicit and almost always entertaining.

Two Dancers, the latest release from Wild Beasts is an eclectic mix of falsetto voices, potent percussion and stark guitar work. The AVID latches on to the rhythm of the title track and arranges the complex layers of voices and instruments in a wonderfully open and easy to follow presentation. Details that can be lost in the overall mix are reproduced without seeming forced or out of place. Tonality is good without being overblown.

Compared to something like the slightly pricier Primare R32, the AVID can seem a little lean, but the more I listened, the more I came to prefer this calm and slightly more 'matter of fact' presentation of the Pellar. This honesty extends to a stark performance with poorer recordings, but it rendered nothing unlistenable.

The Pellar is also something of a champ in terms of timing. It could be argued that connected between a Michell GyroDec and Naim SuperNait, it is unlikely that any phono stage would be lacking in this regard, but there was no question for me that the Pellar is seriously accomplished with up-tempo material. Better still, this doesn't spill over to 'forcing' slower recordings. Part of this is down to the low end drive it possesses. Bass is deep and full of the texture that gives the necessary sense of realism to pieces. This low end shove is extremely well controlled and starts and stops with the agility that sits at the root of all good timing.

The Pellar is a welcome addition to the ranks of phono stages at the price. It's well built, flexible in terms of cartridge choice and has a genuinely appealing presentation that is an intelligent mix of enthusiasm and accuracy. AVID should be very pleased with its new arrival, and it warrants inclusion on any audition shortlist.



Hi-Fi Choice

OUR VERDICT

SOUND QUALITY



LIKE: Impressively built at the price; flexible setup; excellent sound quality

VALUE FOR MONEY



DISLIKE: Lacks euphony of some rival phono stages

BUILD QUALITY



WE SAY: Talented and extremely well thought-out design that should win many friends

FEATURES



OVERALL

